

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of protecting devices formed in a wafer from shining spots present in a periphery of said wafer, said method comprising:

forming a plurality of devices in an inner region of the wafer, the inner region of the wafer being surrounded by a periphery region that extends from the inner region to an edge of the wafer, wherein no devices are formed in the periphery region; and

forming a ring of an organic material, the ring disposed on a top surface of said wafer, wherein the ring separates ~~to separate~~ said periphery region at the top surface of said wafer from the inner region at the top surface of said wafer, and wherein the organic material is not present on a bottom surface of the wafer.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein forming the ring ~~of organic material~~ comprises forming said ring of organic material atop a hard mask layer that is disposed atop said wafer.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein forming the ring ~~of organic material~~ comprises depositing organic material in a region between said periphery of said wafer and said inner region of said wafer.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein forming the ring ~~of organic material~~ comprises depositing organic material atop all of said wafer and then patterning said material to form said ring ~~of organic material~~.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising forming a resist layer prior to forming the ring of ~~organic material~~.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said wafer comprises a silicon wafer.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of forming at least one device in a substrate with a top surface, said method comprising:

depositing a layer of resist atop said substrate, wherein said layer of resist comprises a positive resist;

patterning said layer of resist to form a ring of resist atop said substrate, said ring of resist separating a periphery at the top surface of [[the]] said substrate from an inner region at the top surface of said substrate, wherein said layer of resist is patterned by exposing said layer of resist except for said ring of resist and then removing an exposed portion of said layer of resist;

after removing the exposed portion of said layer of resist, depositing a further layer of resist atop said substrate and atop said ring of resist;

exposing said further layer of resist to form at least one exposed region atop said substrate and atop said ring of resist; and

developing and etching said further layer of resist to form at least one patterned region within said inner region of said substrate, wherein the further layer of resist atop said ring of resist is not patterned.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising:

depositing a pad oxide layer atop said substrate, depositing a pad nitride layer atop said

pad oxide layer, and depositing a hard mask layer atop said pad nitride layer; and

[[and]] forming said ring of ~~material~~ resist atop said hard mask layer.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

etching said hard mask layer using said patterned further layer of resist and said ring of resist as [[an]] a first etch mask; and

[[and]] etching at least one trench region in said substrate using said hard mask layer and said ring of resist as [[an]] a second etch mask.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein said ring of resist is of sufficient thickness that a region of said hard mask layer that is beneath said ring of resist remains after said trench region is etched.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein said ring of resist is of sufficient thickness that a region of said further layer of resist that is atop said ring of resist is not patterned during said step of patterning developing and etching said further layer of resist.

12-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein said substrate [[is]] comprises silicon.

15-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a semiconductor device, the method comprising:

providing a wafer with a top surface that includes a periphery region on the top surface of the wafer surrounding an inner device region on the top surface of the wafer;

forming a ring of a material over the top surface of the wafer, wherein the ring separates to separate the periphery region from the inner device region, wherein the ring ~~of material~~ is formed onto the periphery region without a lithographic step, and wherein the material is not disposed on a bottom surface of the wafer; and

forming a plurality of devices in the inner device region at the top surface of the wafer.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein forming the ring ~~of material~~ comprises forming said ring ~~of material~~ over a hard mask layer that is disposed over said wafer.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein forming the ring ~~of material~~ comprises depositing material in a region between said periphery region and said inner device region.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein said ring ~~of material~~ comprises a resist layer.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein said ring ~~of material~~ comprises an organic material.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 wherein said wafer comprises a silicon wafer.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26 further comprising:

depositing a layer of resist over the wafer, including over the inner device region and over the ring of material;

patterning the layer of resist; and

altering the wafer in alignment with the patterned layer of resist.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the ring of resist protects devices formed in the ~~further~~ inner region of said substrate from shining spots present in said periphery of said substrate.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of forming at least one device in a substrate, said method comprising:

depositing a pad oxide layer atop said substrate;

depositing a pad nitride layer atop said pad oxide layer;

depositing a hard mask layer atop said pad nitride layer;

depositing a layer of resist atop said hard mask layer;

patterning said layer of resist to form a ring of resist, said ring of resist separating a periphery of said substrate from a ~~further~~ an inner region of said substrate;

depositing a further layer of resist atop said hard mask layer and atop said ring of resist;

patterning said further layer of resist to form at least one patterned region within said ~~further~~ inner region of said substrate, said ring of resist being of sufficient thickness that a region

of said further layer of resist that is atop said ring of resist is not patterned;

etching said hard mask layer using said patterned further layer of resist and said ring of resist as an etch mask;

removing the further layer of resist after etching said hard mask layer; and

after removing the further layer of resist, etching at least one trench region in said substrate using said hard mask layer and said ring of resist as an etch mask, said ring of resist being of sufficient thickness that a region of said hard mask layer that is beneath said ring of resist remains after said trench region is etched.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35 wherein said ring of ~~material~~ resist comprises a resist layer.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 36 wherein said ring of ~~material~~ resist comprises an organic material.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35 wherein the ring of resist protects devices formed in the ~~further~~ inner region of said substrate from shining spots present in said periphery of said substrate.